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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/28/2016

TAGS: PREL PHUM NAM HR CU HUMAN RIGHTS

SUBJECT: CROATIAN PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR DEFENDS NAM SUMMIT
POLICY

REF: ZAGREB 990 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Pol Counselor Vonda Delawie for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Ambassador Bradtke reiterated strong U.S. disappointment with President Mesic's planned attendance at the Havana NAM Summit in an August 28 meeting with presidential advisor Jakic. The Ambassador also expressed concerns with Mesic's recent public claim that the U.S. had not objected to the trip, despite several clear statements to the contrary made to the President's staff by both Ambassador Bradtke and his predecessor.

¶2. (C) Jakic waxed NAM-nostalgic, downplayed the significance of the Havana venue, and stressed the importance of re-establishing economic relations with developing countries. He suggested that Mesic had used the "no U.S. objection" language to avoid saying that Washington does not decide Croatian foreign policy. Jakic also asserted that Croatia has no plans to change its observer status in the NAM, and said Mesic will refer in Havana to Euro-Atlantic integration as Croatia's top policy priority.

¶3. (C) COMMENT: Mesic is not well served by advisors like Jakic, with his sincere, but outdated, desire to reach out beyond the developed world for economic ties (China and India undoubtedly filled any Yugoslavian niche) and support for Croatia's UN Security Council seat bid. Ambassador will see Mesic August 29 and will suggest that he could usefully burnish his human rights credentials by publicly acknowledging the dismal situation in Cuba and, following the lead of some EU member countries, expressing support for a democratic transition there. END COMMENT

BRADTKE